GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3809
ANSWERED ON:21.04.2008
SHORTAGE OF OFFICERS IN ARMED FORCES
Bhadana Shri Avtar Singh

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of candidates aspiring for a career in Armed Forces fail in recruitment competitions due to poor knowledge of English and Mathematics;

(b) if so, whether the Government proposes to launch a special drive for recruitment by permitting candidates who are otherwise eligible but lack knowledge of either English or Mathematics to join the Armed Force;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the other steps proposed to be taken to meet this shortage?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY)

(a) to (d): A Statement is attached.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3809 FOR ANSWER ON 21.4.2008

There is no proposal to launch a special recruitment drive for recruitment by permitting candidates who lack knowledge of either English or Mathematics as shortfall in the recruitment process cannot be attributed to these factors. Knowledge of English and Mathematics is not the sole criterion for selection of the officers in the Armed Forces. On the other hand, a good number of candidates pass through the written part of the examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission, many fail to make the grade at the stage of Service Selection Board (SSB) interviews, which is mandatory for selection of officers, as they are not able to meet the requisite selection and medical criterion.

The shortfall in recruitment of officers in the Defence Services are largely due to change in the socio-economic environment and the resultant changes in career preferences, better employment opportunities in other sectors, service conditions required for the Defence Forces etc.

To address the problem of shortages of officers, the Armed Forces have undertaken sustained image projection and publicity campaign to create awareness among the youth on the advantages of taking up a challenging and satisfying career. Candidate-friendly recruitment procedures to attract more number of candidates and a focused publicity drive in various institutions to attract potential candidates have been undertaken. Awareness campaigns, participation in career fairs and exhibitions, advertisements in print and electronic media, counselling and motivational talks in schools, colleges and NCC camps are also some of the other measures in this direction. In addition, the commitment and bravery of the Armed Forces is consistently projected through the electronic and print media.

Several steps have been taken by the three Services to attract talented youth to join the Defence Forces. All officers including those in Short Service Commission (SSC) have been made eligible to hold substantive rank of Captain, Major and Lieutenant Colonel after 2, 6 and 13 years of reckonable service respectively. In addition to the above, 750 posts of Lieutenant Colonels have been upgraded to Colonel's rank. The tenure of SSC officers has also been extended from 10 years to 14 years.